report has not taken into consideration that 9431 villages are depopulated & 846 VPTs were provided by the Private Operators as of 31.3.2002.

(f) All figures given are correct & are actual provisions of VPTs in the country by Government PSUs & Private Basic Service Operators in the country as of 31.3.2002.

Software Piracy

910. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that software piracy is on increase in the country:

(b) the estimated loss from the piracy software in 2001: and

(c) the steps taken by Government to prevent the loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) According to NASSCOM estimates there was an increase in losses due to software piracy in the year 2001 as compared to those in 2000. The estimated loss due to software piracy in the year 2001 is about Rs. 1500 crore.

(c) Government has taken various measures to curtail software piracy which include:

(i) In India the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of software is covered under copy right law, violation of which attracts both fine and punishment.

(ii) Information Technology Act 2000 has been notified w.e.f. 17.10.2000. This act is expected to help in dealing with software piracy and containing the problem.

(iii) Government has also set-up a copy right Enforcement Advisory Council which reviews the progress of enforcement of copy right act and also advises on measures for its better enforcement.

(iv) Information Technology Software is exempted from Customs Duty.

(v) Government has been supporting Anti-Piracy Campaign of NASSCOM and instructions have also been issued to various Government Departments to only use legal copies of software.